



RHODE ISLAND FED

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

<i>Federal Gun Cases</i>	2
<i>Anti-Terrorism</i>	3
<i>Criminal Docket Sheet</i>	4
<i>Civil Docket Sheet</i>	5
<i>Corruption Beat</i>	6
<i>DOJ Initiatives</i>	7

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

<i>Recent sentencings in federal gun cases</i>	2
<i>New England terrorism reports</i>	3
<i>Cianci appeal</i>	6
<i>Homeland Security award to RI EMA</i>	6
<i>RI Inmate Reentry Program—RI Department of Corrections</i>	7

PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS



Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) is a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. It networks existing local law enforcement programs that target gun crimes and provides a focal point for community activists in their anti-violence and anti-crime initiatives.

In Rhode Island, federal PSN funds have paid for additional federal and state prosecutors, supported investigators, provided training, and helped the City of Providence launch *Streetworkers*, a network of violence intervention workers.

As part of PSN, the U.S. Attorney's Office and the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office,



with ATF agents and Providence Police detectives, jointly review gun cases for prosecution. Since 2001, federal gun prosecutions have more than doubled, and gun offenders prosecuted federally have been sentenced to more than 540 years in prison.

“Through PSN, we spread the word: If you commit a gun crime, you’re going to a federal prison — far away and for a long time,” said U.S. Attorney Robert Clark Corrente.

The federal prosecutions and the state Gun Court calendar provide a joint, one-two punch against gun offenders.

FEDERAL GUN CASES

A key component of Project Safe Neighborhoods is aggressive federal prosecution of gun crimes. State and federal prosecutors meet regularly with ATF agents and Providence detectives to determine which gun cases can be prosecuted federally. See Page 2.

FEDERAL GUN CASES



PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS RHODE ISLAND

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Witness Helps Nab Bank Robber

Joseph E. Beaver, 39, was sentenced to 22 years in prison for bank robbery and firearms offenses. **Beaver** held up a bank on Smith Street at gunpoint. A witness followed him from the bank and reported his whereabouts to police on her cell phone. Providence Police found him hiding in an apartment with the gun and robbery loot nearby. **Beaver** had been out of state prison for about a month when he committed the bank robbery.

Armed Career Criminal Sentenced

A federal judge sentenced **Donald J. Porraro**, 50, to 15 years in federal prison for selling a handgun. ATF agents and State Police arrested **Porraro** after he had sold a handgun to an ATF agent posing as a bank robber in need of guns. **Porraro**, with several prior felony convictions that include manslaughter and robbery, was sentenced as an Armed Career Criminal, which requires a minimum 15-year sentence.

A Gun and a Towed Car Lead to Prison

Nirandone Sitthirath, 26, was sentenced to 46 months in prison for being a Felon in Possession of a Firearm. **Sitthirath** owned a handgun that was found under a mattress in his apartment at 57 Candace Street in September, shortly after he had fled from a car. Providence Police arrested **Sitthirath** when he went to reclaim his car, which police had impounded. **Sitthirath** is incarcerated in federal prison in Allenwood, Pennsylvania.

Gun Shots Result in Federal Prosecution

Sigismund Dantzler, 20, was sentenced to 37 months in federal prison for being a Felon in Possession of a Firearm. A Providence patrol officer arrested **Dantzler** in June 2003 after hearing gunshots and observing him toss a handgun under his car. **Dantzler** had prior convictions for drug trafficking and firearms offenses.

Police Nab Passenger and Gun

Carlos Rodriguez had a handgun on him while sitting in a car, and he tried to flee when Providence Police officers approached the car. He tossed away the gun and an ammunition clip. Police officers apprehended him and retrieved the gun and the magazine. A prior felon with convictions for robbery and drug trafficking, **Rodriguez** has been sentenced to 84 months in federal prison for being a Felon in Possession of a Firearm.

Drugs for Guns Trade

Robert Ramos, 22, was sentenced to 96 months in prison for trading crack cocaine for four handguns in the parking lot of a hotel near India Point. His transaction was monitored by federal agents and Providence Police. As a prior felon, **Ramos** was prohibited from possessing firearms. He is incarcerated in federal prison in Otisville, New York.

ANTI-TERRORISM

GRAND JURIES IN NEW ENGLAND INDICT TWO BRITISH SUBJECTS

British Subject Charged With Aiding Shoe-Bomber Richard Reid

10/4/04 Boston, Massachusetts – A federal grand jury charged British national **Saajid Mohammed Badat** with conspiring with and aiding and abetting “shoe bomber” **Richard Reid** to detonate shoe bombs aboard U.S.-based commercial airliners. According to the indictment, **Badat** and **Reid** obtained replacement UK passports, and **Reid** used his on December 22, 2001, to board Flight 63 from Paris to Miami – with a crew of 14 and 184 passengers. One and a half hours into the flight, **Reid** attempted to light bombs hidden in his footwear. Crew and passengers subdued and restrained him for the remainder of the flight, which was diverted to Boston where **Reid** was taken into custody. **Badat** was arrested in the U.K. on November 27, 2003. *U.S. Attorney, Massachusetts*

Grand Jury in Bridgeport Returns Terrorism Indictment

10/6/04, Bridgeport, Connecticut – A federal grand jury indicted a British citizen for allegedly soliciting money and recruiting jihadist fighters using Internet servers headquartered in Connecticut. **Babar Ahmad**, 30, whom British authorities arrested in August, allegedly also purchased bomb-making materials and camouflage suits.

The indictment and an affidavit seeking **Ahmad's** extradition to the United States contain new details about his alleged activities, including his alleged support for **Shamil Basayev**, the Chechen mujaheddin commander who has claimed responsibility for the deadly terrorist attacks on a school in Beslan, Russia, and a Moscow theater. *U.S. Attorney, Connecticut; Washington Post*



HOAX E-MAILS: HOW TO COMMIT A TERRORIST ACT

The FBI in Providence has received reports that Internet users have received e-mails directing them to a Web site advertising bombs and bomb-making equipment, as well as information on “How to Commit a Terrorist Attack.” The e-mails also claim known al-Qaeda, **Hizballah**, **Hamas** and **Abu Sayyaf** terrorist groups as clients. These e-mails have been determined to be hoaxes, known as “Joe-jobs,” designed

to victimize legitimate web sites by generating complaints about the host, damaging the host’s reputation, directing large volumes of traffic to the sites and possibly causing the victim’s Internet service provider to shut down the site.

Recipients of these types of e-mails should disregard them and not respond to them or divulge any type of personal information.

CRIMINAL DOCKET SHEET

PRESCRIPTION DRUG TAMPERING AND DIVERSION

Physician Sentenced to 10 Years for Diluting Vaccines

Wallace Gonsalves, a doctor of osteopathy, was sentenced to ten years in federal prison for two series of offenses: diluting vaccines administered to immigrant patients and diverting free drug samples for sale in a pharmacy. **Gonsalves** was also ordered to pay approximately \$1.1 million in fines, assessments, and restitution (to insurers and patients). A jury found **Gonsalves** guilty of the dilution-related charges and he, along with codefendant **Anthony Albanese**, pleaded guilty to the diversion charges. In addition to diluting vaccines, **Gonsalves** falsified reports submitted to INS certifying that immigrant patients had been tested for syphilis and HIV. He required those patients to pay cash fees and failed to report that income to the IRS.

In the diversion scheme, **Gonsalves** sold pharmacy owner **Albanese** about 290,000 sample pills given to him by drug manufacturers. **Albanese** mixed those pills with prescription stock at his pharmacy – **Cameron's Pawtuxet Pharmacy** – and then fraudulently obtained approximately \$431,000 from health insurers. *Assistant U.S. Attorneys Luis M. Matos and Lisa Dinerman; FDA, Health and Human Services, RI Attorney General and other agencies*

*Convicted doctor to pay
\$1.1 million in fines,
assessments and
restitution.*

DRUG TRAFFICKING

Three Sentenced in Crack House Operation

Charles Brown was sentenced to life imprisonment for conspiracy to distribute crack cocaine. **Brown** and codefendants **Charles Isler** and **Bilal Rashid** operated a crack distribution operation in the first floor apartment of a house on Burnside Avenue, Providence. The entrance hallway had green and red lights – green to signal the dealers were open for business. The life sentence was mandated by the amount of crack cocaine – 164 grams – and because **Brown** had two prior drug-trafficking convictions. **Isler** was sentenced to 262 months in prison and **Rashid** to 210. *Assistant U.S. Attorney Adi Goldstein; Providence Police*

Pair Sentenced for "Vinylized" Heroin

A federal judge has sentenced two men to 70 months in federal prison for about two kilograms of heroin that had been chemically mixed into a vinyl-like slab and disguised as part of a suitcase. Federal agents arrested the pair – **Freddy Alonso Osorio**, 45, of Pawtucket, and **Jaime Restrepo-Mejia**, 34, of Central Falls – as they accepted delivery of the suitcase at a Pawtucket gas station. *Assistant U.S. Attorney Mary Rogers; Immigration & Customs Enforcement; DEA*

235 Months for Crack Cocaine Trafficking

A federal judge sentenced **Antron Russell** to 235 months in federal prison for 141 grams of crack cocaine. Cranston Police detectives

seized the drugs when they arrested **Russell** in a restaurant parking lot on Cranston Street. **Russell** tried to flee and struck three officers with his car. *Assistant U.S. Attorney Kenneth P. Madden; Cranston Police; DEA*

CIVIL DOCKET SHEET

ALIEN DEPORTATION

Violent Alien Deported to Ukraine

Oleg Podoprighora, a citizen of the Ukraine who was admitted to the U.S. as a refugee in 1993, has been deported to the Ukraine because of a violent criminal record that he amassed in this country. The U.S. Attorney successfully opposed his petition to be released from INS custody.

Podoprighora has a criminal record in Massachusetts, extending back to the year of his arrival, that includes convictions for threatening to murder, assault with a dangerous weapon, and violating the Abuse Prevention Act (domestic violence). Because of his violent record, INS began removal proceedings in 1997 and he was ordered deported in 1999. He subsequently filed numerous procedural actions, including three habeas corpus petitions, to combat the deportation and his detention. The most recent petition was denied in U.S. District Court, Providence, and **Podoprighora** was deported to the Ukraine in July 2004. *Assistant U.S. Attorney Robin E. Feder, Civil Division Chief*

FALSE CLAIMS CASE

Billing Company Settles in Client's False Claims Case

Lighthouse Medical Management, Inc., a Providence-based medical billing company, has paid the United States \$454,800 to settle a dispute over questionable ambulance runs made by one of its clients, **Burrillville Ambulance and Rescue Association (BARA)**. The government has a civil complaint pending against **BARA** and its former commander, Dale Allen, alleging that **BARA** billed Medicare for ambulance trips that were medically unnecessary. **Lighthouse** submitted claims to Medicare for ambulance services **BARA** provided to Medicare patients. The United States alleges that certain **BARA** claims for ambulance services "falsely represented that patients receiving routine dialysis treatment were eligible for reimbursement by Medicare for ambulance transportation to and from dialysis..." The trips in question occurred between January 1998 and January 2002. While agreeing to pay the U.S. \$454,800, **Lighthouse** admitted no wrongdoing on its part. *Assistant U.S. Attorney Lisa Dinerman, Affirmative Civil Enforcement*

*Providence-based
medical billing company
pays the U.S.
\$454,800 to settle
dispute*

CORRUPTION BEAT

Court Affirms Plunder Dome Convictions

The First Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston has affirmed the corruption convictions of **Vincent A. Cianci, Jr.**, and two codefendants. A three-judge panel held that there



was ample evidence for a jury to convict the former mayor of Providence on a charge that he ran a racketeering enterprise out of City Hall, and that codefendants **Frank Corrente** and **Richard Autiello** participated in the scheme. A key part of the defendants' appeal was the applicability of the Racketeer Influenced

and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act to public agencies. While two judges of the three-judge panel held that the law was properly applied, one judge dissented. The full court subsequently denied the defendants' request for an "en banc" hearing.

Still at issue are sentencing factors being pressed by **Cianci** and **Corrente**. Using federal sentencing guidelines, Chief U.S. District Court Judge Ernest C. Torres lengthened the defendants' sentences because they violated a public trust and because **Cianci** led the racketeering conspiracy. **Cianci** and **Corrente** maintain that a recent Supreme Court decision – *Blakely v. Washington* – renders those guidelines unconstitutional. The government maintains the opposite and argues that the defen-

dants' sentencing claims are misplaced for a variety of reasons. The defendants have asked the Circuit to postpone any consideration of the sentencing issues until after an impending Supreme Court decision – in the companion cases of *Booker and Fanfan* – that is expected to clarify the constitutionality of the guidelines.

Nine defendants – city officials, attorneys and contractors – pleaded guilty or were found guilty in the five-year-long investigation and prosecution of city-based corruption that was popularly known as **Operation Plunder Dome**. *Assistant U.S. Attorneys Richard W. Rose and Terrence P. Donnelly, Criminal Division; Assistant U.S. Attorney Donald C. Lockhart, Appeals Division*

*Rhode Island
Emergency Management
Agency receives
\$856,000 IT grant
from Homeland Security*

DHS Funds Port Security Communications Network

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has awarded the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency an \$856,000 Information Technology Grant to develop a unified port security communications network. Several agencies, including the Coast Guard, DEM, and the State Police, respond to port security operations, such as escorting Liquefied Propane Gas (LPG) ships and cruise ships through Narragansett Bay. The Rhode Island Port Security Communications Network Project will develop a joint communications system that will provide voice, data and video to field units and have the ability to integrate a range of sensors and early warning devices into one comprehensive security communications system for the responding agencies.



DOJ INITIATIVES AT WORK IN RHODE ISLAND

Rhode Island's Inmate Reentry Program

*by Roberta Richman,
Rhode Island Department of Corrections*

Every year Rhode Island's prisons release thousands of offenders who return home to families and communities that often lack the ability to provide the offenders the support they need to create responsible, crime-free lives. Although the R.I. Dept. of Corrections does provide discharge planning services for selected offenders, it generally lacks the resources and community connections that must be in place if reentry plans are to succeed.

Several years ago a coalition of Providence-based churches and community agencies united with Department of Corrections officials to address these issues. With funding from several private foundations, they created a non-profit agency called the Family Life Center to provide support for of-

fenders and their families during the transitional period immediately before and after the offender is released. COMPASS

Nearly \$2,000,000 in federal funds has now been added to this effort. "Going Home," an initiative of five federal agencies, including the Department of Justice, has funded Rhode Island's reentry project, known as COMPASS – Challenging Offenders to Maintain Positive Associations and Social Stability. This initiative is helping the Center to create the level of support services needed to expand its resources and help facilitate offenders' reentry to the community – services that they often have great difficulty accessing. These services include employment, housing, family counseling, mentoring, victims' services and substance abuse and mental health treatment.

In addition to the many community agency partners in the Family Life Center, COMPASS is a partnership of state agen-

cies, including the Dept. of Children, Youth and Families, Employment and Training, Human Services and Mental Health and Substance Abuse. It will focus on approximately 400 offenders returning to several Providence neighborhoods from the Adult Correctional Institutions.

Attorney General John Ashcroft said the funds were financing programs designed to help returning offenders become productive members of their communities and thus reduce recidivism.

The Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs has taken an active interest in Rhode Island's reentry initiative and the Providence Weed & Seed site is teaming up with the Family Life Center on reentry efforts.

More information about Reentry is available at:

<http://www.ri-familylifecenter.org/>

or

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/>

Family Life Center
supporting ex-offenders and their families

"... the Providence Weed & Seed site is teaming up with the Family Life Center on reentry efforts."



**For information, call
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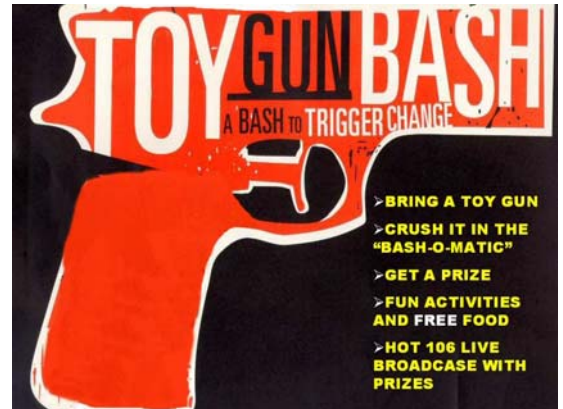
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Criminal Chief
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Lee Vilker
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Thomas M. Connell

UPCOMING EVENTS

Toy Gun Bash
Pawtucket, Rhode Island
November 20, 2004



Call Gale James, 401-709-5023, for time and location